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REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OF THE

Maryland Agricultural College

TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

JANUARY, 1882.

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MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE,
December 9th, 1881.

To the Honorable the General Assembly of Maryland:

The Board of Trustees of the Maryland Agricultural College adopts the following report of its President, and respectfully submits it as required by the provisions of the charter of the College.

By order of the Board of Trustees.

(Signed,) ALLEN DODGE, *Chairman.*

President's Report.

Maryland Agricultural College,
December 9th, 1881.

To the Board of Trustees.

Gentlemen: I have the honor to submit the following report for the quarter ending this day:

The College opened on the 20th of September, since which time we have had thirty-six students, representing eight counties of the State.

In consequence of the withdrawal of the State donation of six thousand dollars it was found necessary to increase the charges to two hundred and seventy-five dollars per year in lieu of two hundred dollars. This accounts for the reduced number of students.

It gives me pleasure to say that the several departments are in good working order; that the prescribed curriculum is being carried out, and that professors and students are working harmoniously.

It is the opinion of the Faculty that we have now the best school we have ever had, and that the College generally is in better condition than ever before.

The reports of the heads of the several departments which I herewith submit will show the studies pursued and the wants of the departments, our limited means will not allow the purchase of the articles required. I have given to the Agricultural and Chemical Departments when it has been in my power and so far have managed to keep up with the wants of the students.

The Farm Superintendent reports the following crops for this year:

Wheat	375 bus.
Corn	175 bbls.
Irish Potatoes	200 bus.
Sweet Potatoes	200 "
Hay	25 tons.
Rye	52 bus.
Oats	60 "

We had an abundance of early vegetables, but owing to the drought the late crop was cut short and the cabbage and celery entirely destroyed by worms or insects.

We have seeded in Fultz wheat thirty-five and a half acres, and in rye seven acres.

For the Agricultural Department in Washington we have seeded sixteen quarts of Henry winter oats, sixteen quarts of Gaines' winter oats and sixteen quarts of Arnold's gold medal wheat. Blanks have been sent from the Agricultural Department, and will be filled up and returned.

Of stock, there are one bull and ten cows; four mules and three horses; seven thoroughbred Yorkshire hogs, one Chester and twenty-six Berkshire and Chester crossed.

We are much in need of a corn crusher and reaper but cannot afford to purchase this year.

We have sold from the farm, of hay and straw, one hundred and ninety-six dollars and thirty-nine cents.

We kept our last year's crop of wheat and sent it to the mill for flour as required. We will do the same this year. By this arrangement we save from one dollar to one dollar and fifty cents a barrel on flour.

The experiments ordered by the Trustees have been made. Ten varieties of wheat were sown and samples of the soil analyzed.

I refer you to the reports of the Professors of Agriculture and Chemistry for the results.

I must confess that it seems to me that the results should have been different. The Fultz wheat, for example, should have yielded more pounds to the plat even if it were injured by the stock.

Experiments, however, to be of any value should be carefully continued for a number of years and should generally originate with the Professor of Agriculture, who is the party most interested in making this Department prominent. The results of these experiments will be tabulated and published for the benefit of all concerned.

The lots were laid out, prepared and seeded by the students. To encourage the agricultural students, I have given for the past three years a valuable gold medal for the best essay on agriculture.

All the work on the farm is now done by the students. In September I discharged all the farm hands but one, who attends to hauling wood and water and the police of the outhouses. I have taken seven young men, who came well recommended, to work on the farm one half their time without remuneration in money. In return they have their board, washing and fuel, and tuition in those departments they prefer.

A careful reading of the reports of the Presidents of the various Agricultural Colleges and an investigation of their catalogues convinces me that in the number of students taking the Agricultural course, in the curriculum, and in the interest taken in the subject by the Faculty and students the Maryland Agricultural College compares favorably with the best institutions in the country.

Great diversity of opinion exists as to what an agricultural education should be—whether it should include the ordinary branches of a collegiate education or consist entirely of subjects relating to agriculture alone, such as mineralogy, geology, chemistry, &c. For my own part, I can see no reason why the farmer should not have as good an education as the doctor or lawyer. This would seem to have been the idea of the originators of the law of Congress passed in 1862, which says: "The leading object shall be, without excluding other *scientific* and *classical studies and including military tactics*, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such

manner as the Legislature of the State may prescribe, in order to promote the *liberal* and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life."

Our curriculum was drawn up with a view to conform to this law.

Great stress is laid upon practical agriculture—some even going so far as to insist upon the students working five or six hours daily on the farm. To such I would say that it is this system, practiced from time immemorial, which has produced the ignorant farm hand of to-day.

Moreover, many of our students have been brought up on farms and are familiar with the ordinary duties of a farmer. They are sent to us for theoretical education, and if we should confine them to the practical part their parents would withdraw them. They say, very truly, that if their sons are to work most of the time they had better do it on their own farms.

It is a common error to look upon the use of the implements used on a farm as a *skilled trade*. This is not at all the case. There is all the difference in the world between a skilled machinist (for example) and a farm laborer—one uses his brain, the other does not. It is to correct this, in my opinion, that agricultural colleges are established; to exercise the brain more and the muscles less.

The old system of forcing a boy to follow the plow for twelve hours a day disgusts him with farm life, and we see him at the age of twenty-one leaving the country for the city in search of a livelihood and recreation.

I said in a former report that if we could not *compel* a boy to become a farmer we could by making his studies interesting and his duties agreeable, (combining the theoretical with the practical in fact) *encourage* him to become one; and this has come to pass, for there has never been among the students so much interest in agriculture or so great a desire to work on the farm as this year.

Another point I should like to call your attention to, and

that is that few fathers desire their sons to become farmers. The agricultural colleges are prepared to give all needful instruction in agriculture as a general thing, but parents do not wish it.

The colleges are held to account because they have few agricultural students; but the fault lies with the parents, not with the colleges. The criticism is not applied to the medical colleges, though they may be no better prepared to teach medicine than we agriculture.

Some believe that all graduates of agricultural colleges must necessarily become farmers. I know no law for this. As a matter of fact most of our graduates teach school for a year or two, though some are farmers, engineers and doctors.

It has been said and believed, by those who will not take the trouble to inform themselves, that our graduates generally enter the army or navy. As another fact I will mention that since I have been at the College not a single graduate has entered the army, navy, marine corps or revenue marine of the United States.

We are required by the law under which we received the United States land scrip to teach military tactics. We teach just enough to cover the law. We have a company drill of forty minutes five days in the week; this does not interfere with the study hours.

During two summers, when the College was in debt, I kept it open for students who wanted to prepare for the examination of engineers in Annapolis. It would seem to be quite in the line of an agricultural and *mechanical* college, which the law assumes us to be, to send students to this examination, but an outcry was raised that we were preparing boys for the navy, so we gave it up and with it a large revenue.

One great trouble we have to contend with is that many boys are withdrawn at the age of seventeen or eighteen, just as they are about to enter the junior class. This is done that they may go to Baltimore and begin business. Our

classes dwindle down from thirty in the Freshman year to five or six in the Senior year. Parents frequently assure me that they are perfectly satisfied with the College, but their sons must commence in business early. I assure them that the best capital a boy can have in life is a good education, but the idea seems to be a fixed one.

When we consider that the population of Baltimore is about one-third the whole population of the State it is not surprising that so many boys go there for occupation.

The last Legislature withdrew the donation of six thousand dollars after the present year.

In consequence of this reduction in our revenue we are obliged to charge each student a tuition fee of seventy-five dollars per year. If we get eighty students we make up the six thousand dollars. The practical operation of this is that the extra amount is made up by the patrons of the College in lieu of the State. Can any one wonder that the number of students falls off?

Since I have been the President of this College, it has been highly indorsed by Governors Groome and Carroll in their biennial messages to the Legislature, and by Prof. M. A. Newell, Superintendent of State Schools. These gentlemen were at the date of their reports trustees of the Institution and supposed to be familiar with its working.

In 1878 a committee from the Committees of Agriculture and Education of the Legislature visited the College, made a thorough investigation, and reported favorably.

In 1880 we were visited by a committee of the Legislature from the Committees of Public Buildings. This committee recommended that the State dispose of its interest in the College, and (I believe) expressed the opinion that agricultural colleges were not wanted.

I confess to much surprise at learning the contents of the report. I supposed the gentlemen belonging to the Committee of Public Buildings came to inspect *our* building and to report upon it—to report as to its general condition; its ventilation, manner of heating, fire escapes, &c. The gen-

tlemen were shown over the building and these points dwelt upon. No questions were asked as to our curriculum; no classes were examined; and, generally, no investigation was made as to our *scholastic condition*.

The chairman of the committee afterwards assured me that no fault was found with my administration of the affairs of the College. It was simply an opinion that agricultural colleges were not required.

It would have been but simple justice on the part of the Legislature to have sent members of the Agricultural and Educational Committees to report upon our usefulness as a College. I hope the next Legislature will send such committees to make a searching investigation.

When I undertook to administer the affairs of the College, I understood that the State had bound itself to the private stockholders to give six thousand dollars annually to the College.

The late Mr. Merryman assured me that he subscribed and induced others to subscribe upon that understanding.

It is true the State reserved to itself the right to withdraw the whole or any part of this endowment, but it was supposed that the State would not take this step without cause.

In the last six years we have paid off an old debt of something over fourteen thousand dollars. I insisted upon using the money for this purpose because I knew that an institution, like an individual, is not a free agent if in debt. We had to clear ourselves of debt before we could breathe freely.

But suppose we had the fourteen thousand dollars accumulated during my administration to expend upon the College and farm; what a different appearance both would present! The professors would not be applying for books and apparatus, nor the farmer for implements and stock.

When the College is so freely criticised, this, as well as many other points, is overlooked.

We receive now outside of students' fees six thousand nine hundred and seventy-five dollars interest on United States land-scrip.

Those unacquainted with the matter, and there are many such, have no idea what a ridiculously small sum this is in comparison with what other colleges receive. Referring to a report made by President Shortlidge of the Pennsylvania State College I find that the University of Michigan by State appropriations and some private donations has a productive fund of nearly seven hundred thousand dollars, besides a large revenue from other sources.

The Massachusetts Agricultural College expended in 1877	$ 56,619
The annual expenditure of the Missouri Agricultural University is	70,522
Of Swarthmore College	75,000
Of Washington University	80,000
Of Cornell University	100,000
Of the College of New Jersey	100,000
Columbia College	206,801
Harvard University nearly	700,000

I could multiply the list but it is unnecessary. I give it because I have heard the opinion expressed that all colleges should be self-supporting.

When the trustees decided in April last to charge seventy-five dollars, annually, tuition fee it was ordered also that the professors' salaries (including the President's, of course) should be reduced twenty per cent. Though the salaries were but moderate at the time yet the reduction was cheerfully agreed to by the faculty in their great desire to uphold the Institution and not lose the fruits of six years' labor.

The original act under which the donation was received says this sum of six thousand dollars shall be paid "as an annual endowment of the said Maryland Agricultural College, and shall, by the Board of Trustees, be applied to the *payment of salaries of professors*," &c., so that unless other means were provided the withdrawal of the donation stopped the salaries of the professors.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this report we have taken seven young men of the State this year entirely free of charge, they working on the farm five hours a day, and this although we receive no aid from the State this scholastic year.

Supposing that we receive the one thousand five hundred dollars which we claim from the State as due [being the fourth quarterly payment for 1881] we may manage to run through the scholastic year without falling much behind. In the meantime we shall not be able to spare a dollar for books, scientific apparatus, table and house furniture, &c., &c.

As in the course of time money *must* be spent for these things we must, unless we receive aid from outside, reduce our expenses by reducing the number of professors. If we could expect the number of students to reach eighty or even sixty this would not be necessary; but for the reasons before stated it cannot be reasonably looked for.

Parents will not pay an additional tax of seventy-five dollars when they are already paying a school tax.

By the close of the term I will be able to judge more intelligently of our prospects and will be prepared to submit a plan for continuing the College.

I have thus, gentlemen, placed before you the condition of affairs here. If the State will give us the donation of six thousand dollars a year, *for a term of years*, it can be well expended for the benefit of our agricultural classes; but if we must go to the Legislature every time it meets for a renewal of the donation then I think we had better give it up entirely. No college can possibly succeed under such circumstances; it is an impossibility. I am not alone in this opinion. Two weeks ago the College was visited by three of the Trustees of the Massachusetts Agricultural College who told me they had arrived at the same conclusion.

It is impossible to decide upon any future policy when we cannot count upon our means; moreover, our students are kept in a constant state of uncertainty; reports are circulated that we are about to close, and parents hesitate to send their sons to a college which may close before they have graduated.

These are some of the difficulties we have to encounter, but there are others. At the meeting of the Legislature every discharged employee goes there with a grievance, and

unfortunately does not always adhere to the truth. Legislators are prejudiced at the beginning of the session; they do not stop to consider that a discharged employee has an appeal to the entire Board of Trustees; that reports prejudicial to the College should be investigated; but with that proneness to believe all that is bad rather than that which is good, which seems to be common to us all, they come to a conclusion and vote to withdraw a small appropriation of six thousand dollars a year to a *State* school when other *State* schools, white and colored, are receiving millions.

I do not hesitate to say again that if we are to go to the Legislature every session for a donation it is better to decline it. I could give many more reasons for this, but you may rely upon it that no college can succeed under the system. The past is strewn with just such wrecks.

It is for you, gentlemen, to decide as to what action shall be taken. I say for the Faculty that we have done our part; we have devoted our energies to maintaining the standard of the College, and have from our salaries even contributed more than one-fourth of the donation formerly given by the State in order that it might continue on for this year at least. If the course pursued is not entirely approved by the Board of Trustees we have never been so notified, but have continued on in the path marked out for us by the trustees themselves.

I believe that you have it in your power to secure the necessary aid from the State. I believe that a bill can be passed to give us six thousand dollars for this year, and to continue it for a term of years. It can be done if you earnestly desire it. A committee of your body can accomplish it. I earnestly beg you to give this your serious consideration to-day. The future of the College is at stake.

The Registrar will present his accounts, which I request may be audited.

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Before closing this report, I must recall to you that since our last meeting we have met with a sad loss in the death

of the Hon. John Merryman, one of our Trustees. His death, though not unexpected, was a blow to us all.

I found Mr. Merryman an honest coadjutor and a genial friend.

The Faculty passed appropriate resolutions, which were printed and sent to his family, and a deputation represented the College at the funeral.

Respectfully,

WM. H. PARKER,

President.